

## TREE-PLANTING.

Kaingaroa, situated on the pumice plains, thirty-three miles from Rotorua, in the thermal-springs district, still remains our only afforestation camp. Military court-martialled prisoners formed the bulk of the inmates for the whole of the last calendar year, but with the advent of peace the numbers have diminished until at the present time criminal prisoners are again in the ascendant.

The work of clearing, pitting, and planting has proceeded without intermission, there being no trouble of any kind, except the usual amount of winter rain, to impede the successful carrying-out of the afforestation programme for the year.

In addition to the ordinary planting-work, the officer in charge at Kaingaroa has succeeded in growing a satisfactory oat crop on the pumice lands, as well as an excellent crop of potatoes and vegetables of all kinds. Fifty pigs were also bred on the area under his control.

The returns furnished by the Forestry Department show that 1,423,575 trees, covering an area of 1,085 acres, were planted during the year ended 31st March last, the sum paid by that Department for the labour of the prisoners employed being £2,793 2s. 1d.

The total number of trees and the area planted by prison labour, together with the labour-value of the work involved since the inception of the scheme in 1901, is shown in the table below :

Area planted by Prison Labour from 1901 to March, 1919.	Number of Trees planted.	Labour-value of Prisoners' Work.
15,274 acres	39,802,075	£62,936

## EMPLOYMENT OF PRISON LABOUR.

The section of this report supplied by the Acting Inspector of Prisons and Supervisor of Works illustrates clearly the varied nature of the work carried out on our different properties in the North and South Islands. Much has been done in the past twelve months to improve and develop our farms, to build up our dairy herds, and generally to advance the agricultural policy of the Department on the lines laid down in my first annual report. We are able to say that, while the necessity of sending men to prison is as regrettable as it always has been, the old and well-deserved reproach that their labour while in prison ceased to be an asset to the State is removed. Every able-bodied prisoner is now as fully employed as our system can compel him to be, while the large percentage of unfit men who gravitate to the gaols are disposed of as efficiently as possible. The latter class constitute a problem that neither the Prisons Department nor any outside system or association has been able to solve. For them there should be a special State institution. Gaol is no fit place for the human derelicts that are constantly being committed there by Judges and Magistrates for want of some better and more suitable institution to send them to.

## INSTITUTIONAL SCHOOLS, PHYSICAL CULTURE, ETC.

The evening schools at Auckland and Invercargill have been carried on satisfactorily, while physical culture has received due attention in these two institutions as in previous years.

In my last year's report I remarked upon the necessity for raising the standard of education at the Invercargill Borstal Institution, and generally improving the system there to enable the place to be carried on more in conformity with the Borstal institutions in England. I am pleased to say that the improvements then recommended are now being carried out. The appointment of a second schoolmaster has enabled us to make provision for carrying on the education of the boys and young men confined at Invercargill to the limit of the Board-school system, and also to arrange for preparatory classes for more advanced subjects.

Arrangements are now being made for the appointment of a full-time schoolmaster for the Waikeria Reformatory, and I hope to be able to report next year that the younger inmates of that institution are being given an opportunity to improve themselves educationally while they are under our control.

## CLASSIFICATION OF PRISONERS.

The improved systems of interclassification at Waikeria and Invercargill referred to in my last report have worked satisfactorily, and arrangements are now in progress for building a superstructure on the foundation thus created. The progress of the buildings in course of erection at both places has given us much-needed facilities in this direction that have hitherto been entirely wanting.

It is hoped that the present year will be the last in which we shall be compelled to provide accommodation for a large number of military offenders. The provision required for this class of prisoner has militated seriously against the advancement we wished to make in the proper separation and classification of the different types of criminal prisoners, and it is only by their final disappearance from the civil prisons that we shall be able to establish and maintain a really satisfactory system in our more recently created institutions. Hitherto our accommodation has been too limited and our buildings too obsolete in their internal arrangements to enable any substantial improvement to be made.